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10 October 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Dr. MIRO Cardona on 6 October

1. Dr. MIRO arrived about 9:50 a.m. for the meeting we had set at 10:00; again he was driven by his secretary whom he introduced. As during the first meeting, she remained outside in the car. Our meeting lasted until 12:00 noon.

2. First, Dr. MIRO handed me a note in longhand listing the topics discussed with me on 5 October. These points are:

a. Groups conducting propaganda, etc. with Agency support should receive their support and be coordinated through the Council.

b. A propaganda campaign should be waged by the Council aimed at:

(1) Cuba, via a long wave radio station in Key West.

(2) Cubans in Miami and other U. S. areas by:

(a) Subsidizing Diario de las Americas.

(b) Contracting for time on radio stations.

(3) Latin America, with a plan such as the "Operacion Grieta."

c. Underground Activities.

(1) Provision of monthly funds to Council for procuring Cuban pesos to send to the seven-odd resistance groups in Cuba through reliable channels (such as previously sent through the Italian Embassy).

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(2) Commando action as outlined in plan presented to me on 6 October.

3. Commando Plan

Then Dr. MIRO handed me a plan (in English) for clandestine action prepared by his military collaborators, whom he named as Colonel Manuel VARELA Castro, an officer of the Academy, Captain Enrique DESPAIGNE, and Colonel (fnu) MONTEAGUDO. He stated that they were of the BARQUIN group and had been prisoners.

With respect to the plan for clandestine operations in Cuba, he stated that 300 men could be counted upon for commando action, part of them here, part in Cuba. He reiterated that a commando operation was essential to bolster morale among the anti-Castro elements in Cuba and in exile as well as to conduct sabotage that would further weaken Cuban economy and the Communist regime. He said that for this operation U. S. help would be necessary in providing weapons, ammo, demolitions, equipment, and funds. He proposed that if this plan was considered to have merit, that I arrange to have someone meet with his military men to work out the details. After all preparations had been made and materiel provided, etc. the operation would be purely a Cuban affair. (NOTE: Plan turned over to Thompson at our meeting at 13:30 on 6 October for transmission.)

4. Request for Arms, etc. to send to Escambray

Dr. MIRO remarked that over a month ago he had made a request to Clark for arms for the anti-Castro insurgents in the Escambray, but to date had heard nothing relative to the request. He commented wryly, "I ask but never hear an answer." He said that the fighters there should be supported. Dr. MIRO stated that he had a boat (provided by us) and a means for delivery of the arms. Osvaldo RAMIREZ is chief of the Escambray group.

COMMENT: Has anything been done about this request?

5. Information on Arms Received by Castro Regime

Dr. MIRO handed me a long report which he said was brought to him by the Argentine Ambassador to Cuba when the latter came to the U. S. at the time of President FRONDIZI's visit.* He said the Ambassador would not divulge the source of the information but commented, "You will know."

* Report turned over to Thompson on 6 October.

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Dr. MIRO said there was no way to determine the accuracy of the figures given of planes, guns, etc. received from the Soviet bloc (and Italy and Canada) but even if the figures were exaggerated 100 per cent, they would still be impressive.

He added that Castro is daily becoming stronger militarily with weapons and with a large militia of close to 300,000 being trained to use them while the economy continues to deteriorate. Perhaps only half the militia would be effective. But that is siseable. Thus, he said, the longer the delay in positive military action to overthrow Castro, the greater will be the task. "We must act soon, vigorously and effectively, to insure victory. Another defeat would be disastrous and would make Cubans, Latin Americans and others believe Castro to be invincible. Then would come accommodations and even worse, the implanting of Castro-backed regimes in the hemisphere. And the U. S. would suffer worst of all, being discredited for defeat and "guilt of interference." "In the UN no nation would stand beside the U. S."

6. Proposal that Council go to Cuba with Commando Group and Establish a Government on Cuban Soil

Dr. MIRO then declared that he was convinced that Castro would never be overthrown by all the propaganda, the sabotage, commando raids, guerrilla activities, rupture of diplomatic relations and deteriorating economy, and that it was inconceivable to establish a government-in-exile for nothing would come of it; that the only solution for defeating the Castro regime was for the Revolutionary Council to go to Cuba and establish a government on Cuban soil, ask recognition by all friendly countries and military assistance of its principal ally, the U. S., and that the U.S. be ready to intervene immediately with its Forces. "This would all have to take place in a matter of 48 hours, otherwise it would fail. I recognize that this is a bold plan, but boldness is necessary. There will be many risks, many may be killed. As for myself, I don't care if I die. I have lost all my personal possessions and my son is a prisoner." He reiterated that all must be well prepared in advance, there must be no vacillation, everything must proceed rapidly. First, a commando raid in force to seize a piece of Cuban territory, preferably near Guantanamo, and immediately the members of the Council go ashore, proclaim a provisional government, broadcast by radio to all nations an appeal for recognition (and cables prepared in advance would also be sent out), request U. S. assistance, and the U. S. should furnish such assistance at once in adequate strength to ensure victory.

Before such an action is undertaken, the enemy must be softened by propaganda, sabotage, raids, underground action, and the mass of the people of Cuba must be prepared to accept the provisional government through propaganda, increased knowledge of the Council and its unifying efforts.

Dr. MIRO asked me what I thought of this ~~project~~; did I think that Castro could be overthrown in any other way. I admitted that strong military action appeared necessary. I stated further that of course his plan would have to be studied at the highest government levels. He proposed that he might elaborate a plan with his military collaborators, and I suggested that he do this so that it might be examined and considered.

Dr. MIRO declared that he was convinced that this Communist dagger in the side of the States could only be eradicated by such action, that the U.S. is and will be blamed for all anti-Castro propaganda, sabotage, etc. and that enemy states will denounce it for intervention in Cuba, but that if the U. S. goes to the aid of a friendly revolutionary regime established in the country and helps it defeat the Soviet-backed Communist regime, all friendly governments will applaud.

"I have no personal political ambitions," declared MIRO. "I merely am trying to chair the Council, whose mission is to unify the anti-Castro elements inside and outside of Cuba. If the team isn't considered effective, then change the pitcher. But I believe the Council must establish itself on Cuban soil, and soon. Time is against us." "The Junta del Este agreement will backfire against the U. S. if Castro is allowed to remain in Cuba. In a year, after the politicos of the countries receiving U. S. aid have gotten their hands on U. S. gold, they will say, 'Thanks to Castro, we got this.' And they will spend it as in the past with no benefits to the social and economic welfare of the people."

7. Views about the Judges and Lawyers

I queried Dr. MIRO as to his views relative to the judges and lawyers and their future status. He said he hoped that they could all reunite and that they could be given assistance as in the past. He declared that Dr. ALABAU was not qualified to be a justice and that he was doing nothing but making politics and trying to discredit the Council and MIRO and VARONA. Dr. MIRO declared that he, as Prime Minister in the early days of the Castro government, had named ALABAU to the

Supreme Court, but that now he considered LABAU unfit to hold any judicial position.

8. Members of the Revolutionary Council

Dr. MIRO remarked that he had a meeting of the Council on 10 October. I asked what elements now composed it and what he proposed to add. He named the following as presently in the Consejo:

Rescate
30 de Noviembre
MRR
Accion Democratica
20 de Mayo
AAA Independiente
MDC
Montecristi

He said he had invited to join:

MRP
Unidad Revolucionaria

and awaited their reply.

He would also like to have the Workers, Students, and the Professionals (Doctors, Lawyers, etc.) come into the Council. He believes Batistianos and Comunistas and elements unwilling to cooperate should be excluded, but that all other groups should be brought together under the Council.

He contends that all anti-Castro activities, except clandestine and military, should be coordinated by members of the Council, but that the excepted activities should be known only to him (MIRO).

9. Probable Argentine Rupture of Relations with Cuba

Dr. MIRO declared that he believed imminent the Argentine rupture of relations with Cuba. He said the Argentine Ambassador to Cuba (Julio AMOEDO) was ordered to return to Havana (he had been vacationing in the U. S. after FRONDIZI's visit); that VILLANUEVA, a Secretary of the Argentine Embassy in Cuba was coming to see MIRO today; and further that he (MIRO) had received a phone call last night

from a Spaniard (Nicanor FERNANDEZ) in Buenos Aires, urging MIRO to go to Buenos Aires to arouse anti-Castro sentiment of the people, inasmuch as some Argentine action against Cuba appeared imminent. (FERNANDEZ said he had already written MIRO a letter.) MIRO says, "Of course, I cannot go. I have the Consejo meeting on the 10th. Furthermore, I am going to New York on October 11th or 12th for the SIP (Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa) meeting and have been allotted 12 minutes to address the meeting."

10. MIRO to attend Homage to LACERDA (Brasilian who Precipitated QUADROS' resignation) on October 15

Dr. MIRO said he planned to remain in New York City (after 11 and 12 October SIP meeting) until October 15th to attend the homage for LACERDA, the Governor of Guanabara province in Brasil. MIRO probably will stay at the Park Chambers Hotel, but will advise Clark of his location.

I commented that I would probably remain in Washington next week in view of his plans, but that I might go to New York City to meet with him; if so, I would get in touch with him and arrange a meeting time and place through Clark.

11. Propaganda Commission

I asked Dr. MIRO about his ideas on the future organization and structure of the Propaganda Commission. He stated that it is outside the Consejo and not under his direct control, although the Council accountant has been passing funds to it. He said CARRILLO had resigned as head of Propaganda and that he would like CONTE AGUERO to handle it. He claimed that MESTRE had not done anything with propaganda.

12. MIRO's Views Relative to Supreme Court Justice or PRIO being Recognized as Head of a Provisional Government

I asked Dr. MIRO if he believed that there were many anti-Castro Cubans (both in and out of Cuba) who favored PRIO, or the head of the Supreme Court to be the provisional president if a government were to be established on Cuban soil. Dr. MIRO declared that the revolution is a fact, and that practically nobody wants to go back to any former regime. The people in Cuba would resist any such possibility. He de-

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nounced FRIC's activities against the Council and its efforts to unify the anti-Castro elements. He said that the people should be given an opportunity to elect their chief of state after Castro's overthrow and reestablishment of order in the island.

13. Offices of Council (Consejo Revolucionario)

When questioned about his business and private telephones, MIRO said, "The business phone is also in my house. I have no office except in my house, but that phone is always busy (JEfferson 2-4680). So use the other phone (JEfferson 4-2751) when you wish to call me."

"I need to have a small office somewhere away from my home because all the activities there are driving my wife crazy. I want to find something modest so that no accusation can be made of ostentation - merely a room for myself, one for my secretary, and one for meetings, of the Council, etc. The FRD had a place but at that place also was the press, the refugee center, etc. It would not be satisfactory. The FRD is now practically dead. It was the forerunner of the Consejo as the unifying agency of the anti-Castro resistance."

14. MIRO's Views on Coordinating the Activities of Other Exile Groups

After Dr. MIRO reiterated his view that he should be the channel for funds and coordinating the activities of groups outside the Consejo such as the Students, FORD (Labor), etc., I said that I understood that some of those elements were unwilling to function under the Consejo, and that in view of that situation, did he consider that an Activity Committee might be organized with a delegate from each of these groups and under the chairmanship of a member of the Consejo. This would serve to coordinate their activities, give them a tie-in with the Consejo, yet not make them subservient to it. Dr. MIRO replied that this would merely set up another Consejo outside of and parallel to the existing Consejo. I did not pursue this further, not having enough background of these organizations to be able to discuss the matter effectively.

15. Telephone Conversation with MIRO on 7 October

Before my departure from Miami for Washington on 7 October, I telephoned to Dr. MIRO from the airport. He appreciated the call and asked if I had seen in the morning paper the action taken yesterday by

the ALABAU Lawyers' group in proclaiming Julio GARCERAN (one of the chief justices in exile) as "President of Cuba at War." He expressed his indignation at this unilateral "political" move by ALABAU and his adherents among the exiled lawyers and judges. He added his best wishes to me and reminded me that he would probably go to New York on October 11th or 12th for the SIP (Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa) meeting. I replied that I would appreciate if he would contact Clark after his arrival to give his location in New York City, and that Clark might have a request from me for an appointment with him, if this seemed desirable. I suggested that in future phone conversations I would be known as JUANITO. He agreed with pleasure that this would be a good procedure. I wished him Godspeed and he replied likewise to me.

16. Comment

During these first two meetings I endeavored to establish myself favorably with Dr. MIRO and therefore refrained from bringing up details of budget or opposition to any of his specific proposals. I listened, asked various questions, and he talked at length.

In future meetings, after I have gained further background and have more policy guidance, I shall be able to discuss with him specific issues and endeavor to reach agreements or compromises, as may be required.